The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)

Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips

The Muslim scholar Abu Ameenah Philips has kindly agreed to let MSA-USC display three chapters (1, 2, and 10) from his book **"The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)"**. This book is *highly recommended* reading for those who would like to learn about the **basis of Islam:** there is no being worthy of worship except Allah (God), and Allah is Absolutely One and Absolutely Unique. We note also that a Muslim is further obligated to accept the Prophet Muhammad (saws) as Allah's final prophet to humanity.

1. CHAPTER ON THE CATEGORIES OF TAWHEED

Literally *Tawheed* means "unification" (making something one) or "asserting oneness", and it comes from the Arabic verb *(wahhada)* which itself means to unite, unify or consolidate.[1] However, when the term *Tawheed* is used in reference to Allaah (i.e. *Tawheedullaah*[2]), it means the realizing and maintaining of Allaah's unity in all of man's actions which directly or indirectly relate to Him. It is the belief that Allaah is One, without partner in His dominion and His actions (*Ruboobeeyah*), One without similitude in His essence and attributes (*Asmaa wa Sifaat*), and One without rival in His divinity and in worship (*Ulooheeyah/'Ebaadah*). These three aspects form the basis for the categories into which the science of *Tawheed* has been traditionally divided. The three overlap and are inseparable to such a degree that whoever omits any one aspect has failed to complete the requirements of *Tawheed*. The omission of any of the above mentioned aspects of *Tawheed* is referred to as *"Shirk"* (lit. sharing); the association of partners with Allaah, which, in Islamic terms, is in fact idolatry.

The three categories of *Tawheed* are commonly referred to by the following titles:

1. *Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah* (lit. "Maintaining the Unity of Lordship")

2. *Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat* (lit. "Maintaining the Unity of Allaah's Names and Attributes")

3. *Tawheed al-'Ebaadah* (lit. "Maintaining the Unity of Allaah's Worship")[3]

The division of *Tawheed* into its components was not done by the Prophet (saws) nor by his companions, as there was no necessity to analyze such a basic principle of faith in this fashion. However, the foundations of the components are all implied in the verses of the Qur'aan and in the explanatory statements of the Prophet (saws) and his companions, as will became evident to the reader when each category is dealt with in more detail later in this chapter.

The necessity for this analytical approach to the principle of *Tawheed* arose after Islaam spread into Egypt, Byzantium, Persia and India and absorbed the cultures of these regions. It is only natural to expect that when the peoples of these lands entered the fold of Islaam, they would carry

with them some of the remnants of their former beliefs. When some of these new converts began to express in writings and discussions, their various philosophical concepts of God, confusion arose in which the pure and simple unitarian belief of Islaam became threatened. There were also others who had outwardly accepted Islaam but secretly worked to destroy the religion from within, due to their inability to oppose it militarily. This group began to actively propagate distorted ideas about Allaah among the masses in order to tear down the first pillar of *Eemaan* (faith) and with it Islaam itself.

According to Muslim historians, the first Muslim to express the position of man's free-will and the absence of destiny (*Qadar*) was an Iraqi convert from Christianity by the name of Sausan. Sausan later reverted to Christianity but not before infecting his student, Ma'bad ibn Khaalid al-Juhanee from Basrah. Ma'bad spread the teachings of his master until he was caught and executed by the Umayyad Caliph, 'Abdul-Malik ibn Marwaan (685-705), in the year 700 CE.4 The younger *Sahaabah* (companions of the Prophet (saws)) who were alive during this period, like 'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar (d. 694 CE) and 'Abdullaah in Abee Awfaa (d. 705CE), advised the people not to greet those who denied destiny nor make funeral prayers for those of them who died. That is, they considered them to be disbelievers.5 However, Christian philosophical arguments for free-will continued to find new supporters. Ghailaan ibn Muslim from Damascus studied under Ma'bad and championed the cause of free-will until he was brought before Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez (717-720CE). He recanted his beliefs publicly, however, [and] on the caliph's death, he resumed teaching free-will. The following caliph, Hishaam ibn 'Abdul-Malik (724-743CE), had him arrested, tried and executed.6 Another prominent figure in this controversy was al-Ja'd ibn Dirham, who not only supported the philosophy of free-will, but also attempted to re-interpret the Qur'anic verses containing descriptions of Allaah's qualities according to neo-platonic philosophy. Al-Ja'd was at one point a tutor for the Umayyad prince, Marwaan ibn Muhammad, who later became the fourteenth caliph (744-750CE). During his lectures in Damascus, he openly denied some of Allaah's attributes, like seeing, hearing etc., until the Umayyad governor expelled him.7 He then fled to Kufah, where he continued to propound his ideas and gather followers until his heretical opinions became widely publicized and the Umayyad governor, Khaalid ibn Abdillaah, had him publicly executed in 736 CE. However, his main disciple, Jahm ibn Safwaan, continued to defend his master's doctrines in philosophical circles in Tirmiz and Balakh, when his heresies became widespread, he was executed by the Umayyad governor, Nasr ibn Sayyaar, in 743CE.8

The early caliphs and their governors were closer to Islamic principles and the consciousness of the masses was higher due to the presence of the Prophet's companions and their students. Hence, the demand for the elimination of open heretics received immediate response from the rulers. In contrast, the later Umayyad caliphs were more corrupt and as such cared little about such religious issues. The masses were also less Islamically conscious and thus were more susceptible to deviant ideas. As greater numbers of people entered Islaam, and the learning of an increasing number of conquered nations was absorbed, the execution of apostates was no longer used to stem the rising tide of heresy. The task of opposing the tide of heresy fell on the shoulders of the Muslim scholars of this period who rose to meet the challenge intellectually. They systematically opposed the various alien philosophies and creeds by categorizing them and countering them with principles deduced from the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. It was out of this defense that the science of *Tawheed* emerged with its precisely defined categories and components. This process of specialization occurred simultaneously in all of the other areas of Islamic knowledge as it has done in the various

secular sciences of today. Therefore, as the categories of *Tawheed* are studied separately and in more depth, it must not be forgotten that they are all a part of an organic whole which is itself the foundation of a greater whole, Islaam itself.

Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah (Maintaining the Unity of Lordship)

This category is based on the fundamental concept that Allaah alone caused all things to exist when there was nothing; He sustains and maintains creation without any need from it or for it; and He is the sole Lord of the universe and its inhabitants without any real challenge to His sovereignty. In Arabic the word used to describe this creator-sustainer quality is *Ruboobeeyah* which is derived from the root *"Rabb"* (Lord). According to this category, since God is the only real power in existence, it is He who gave all things the power to move and to change. Nothing happens in creation except what He allows to happen. In recognition of this reality, Prophet Muhammad (saws) used to often repeat the exclamatory phrase *"La hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah"* (There is no movement nor power except by Allaah's will).

The basis for the *Ruboobeeyah* concept can be found in many Qur'anic verses. For example, Allaah says:

"Allaah created all things and He Is the agent on which all things depend."[9]
"And Allaah created you all and whatever you do."[10]
"It was not you who threw, when you threw, but it was Allaah who threw."[11]
"And no calamity strikes except by Allaah's permission."[12]

The Prophet (saws) further elaborated on this concept saying, *"Be aware that if the whole of mankind gathered together in order to do something to help you, they would only be able to do something for you which Allaah had already written for you. Likewise, if the whole of mankind gathered together to harm you, they would only be able to do something to harm you which Allaah had already written to happen to you"*[13]

Thus, what man conceives as good fortune and misfortune are merely events predestined by Allaah as part of the tests of this life. The incidents follow patterns set only by Allaah. Allaah has said in the Qur'aan,

"O Believers! Surely there Is In your wives and children an enemy for you, so beware of them."[14]

That is, within the good things of this life there are severe tests of one's faith in God. Likewise, in the terrible events of life there lies test as is mentioned in the verse,

"Surely We will test you with fear, hunger, loss of wealth and life and the fruits of your work, so give glad tidings to those who are patient."[15]

Sometimes the patterns are recognizable, as in the case of cause and effect relationships, and sometimes they are not, as in the case when apparently good results come from evil means or bad

results from good means. God has explained that the wisdom behind these apparent irregularities is often beyond man's immediate comprehension due to his limited scope of knowledge.

"Perhaps you may dislike something which is really good for you or like something bad for you, but Allaah knows (what is best for you), and you do not."16

Apparently evil events in human lives sometimes turn out to be for the best and apparently good things which people desire turn out to be harmful. Consequently, man's realm of influence in the course of events which make up his life is limited to the mental choice between options presented to him and not the actual results of his choice. In other words "man proposes and God disposes". Apparent "good fortune" and "misfortune" are both from Allaah and can not be caused by good-luck charms such as rabbit's feet, four-leaf clovers, wishbones, lucky numbers, zodiacal signs, etc., or by omens of bad luck like Friday the thirteenth, breaking mirrors, black cats, etc. In fact, the belief in charms and omens is a manifestation of the grave sin of *Shirk* (association) in this form of *Tawheed*. 'Uqbah, one of the companions of the Prophet (saws), reported *that once a group of men approached Allaah's messenger to give their allegiance to him, and he accepted the oath from nine of them but refused to accept it from one. When they asked him why he refused their companion's oath, he replied, "Verily, he is wearing an amulet"17 The man who was wearing the amulet put his hand in his cloak, pulled the amulet off and broke it then made the oath. The Prophet (saws) then said, "Whoever wears an amulet has committed Shirk."*18

As for using the Qur'aan like a charm or amulet by wearing or carrying Qur'anic verses on chains or in pouches to ward off evil or to bring good fortune, there is little difference between such practices and those of the pagans. Neither the Prophet (saws) nor his Companions used the Qur'aan in this fashion, and the Prophet (saws) said, *"Whoever innovates in Islaam something which does not belong to it will have it rejected."*19 It is true that the Qur'anic chapters, an-Naas and al-Falaq, were revealed specifically for exorcism (that is, for removing evil spells), but the Prophet (saws) demonstrated the proper method by which they should be used. On an occasion when a spell had been cast on him, he told 'Alee ibn Abee Taalib to recite the two chapters verse by verse and when he became ill he used to recite them on himself.20 He did not write them down and hang them around his neck, tie them on his arm or around his waist, nor did he tell others to do so.

Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat (Maintaining the Unity of Allaah's Names and Attributes).

This category of *Tawheed* has five main aspects:

1. For the unity of Allaah's names and attributes to be maintained in the first aspect, Allaah must be referred to according to how He and His Prophet (saws) have described Him without explaining away His names and attributes by giving them meanings other than their obvious meanings. For example, Allaah in the Qur'aan says He gets angry with the disbelievers and the hypocrites. He says:

"That He may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the pagans men and women, who have an evil opinion of Allaah. A circle of evil is around them; Allaah is angry with them, curses them and has prepared for them an evil end."[21]

Thus, anger is one of God's attributes. It is incorrect to say that His anger must mean His punishment since anger is a sign of weakness in man and, as such, not befitting of Allaah. What Allaah has stated should be accepted with the qualification that His anger is not like human anger, based on Allaah's statement, *"There is nothing like him"*.[22] The process of so-called "rational" interpretation when taken to its logical conclusion results in the denial of God's very existence. For, Allaah describes Himself as living and man lives, therefore, according to the rationalist argument, God is neither living nor existing. The fact is that the similarity between God's attributes and those of mankind is only in name and not in degree. When attributes are used in reference to God, they are to be taken in the absolute sense, free from human deficiencies.

2. The second aspect of *Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat* involves referring to Allaah as He has referred to Himself without giving Him any new names or attributes. For example, Allaah may not be given the name al-Ghaadib (the Angry one), in spite of the fact that He has said that He gets angry, because neither Allaah nor His messenger has used this name. This may seem to be a very fine point, but it must be maintained in order to prevent the false description of God. That is, finite man is in no position to define the infinite Lord of creation.

3. In the third aspect of *Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat* Allaah is referred to without giving Him the attributes of His creation. For example, it is claimed in the Bible and Torah that Allaah spent the first six days creating the universe then slept on the seventh.[23] For this reason, Jews and Christians take either Saturday or Sunday as a day of rest in which work is looked at as a sin. Such a claim assigns to God the attributes of His creation. It is man who tires after heavy work and needs sleep to recuperate.[24] Elsewhere in the Bible and Torah, God is portrayed as repenting for His bad thoughts in the same way that humans do when they realize their errors.[25] Similarly the claim that God is a spirit or has a spirit completely ruins this area of *Tawheed*. Allaah does not refer to Himself as a spirit anywhere in the Qur'aan nor does His Prophet (saws) express anything of that nature in *Hadeeth*. In fact, Allaah refers to the spirit as part of His creation.[26]

The key principle which should be followed when dealing with Allaah's attributes is the Qur'anic formula,

"There is nothing like Him and He is hearer and seer of all."[27]

The attributes of hearing and seeing are among human attributes, but when they are attributed to The Divine Being they are without comparison in their perfection. However, when these attributes are associated with men they necessitate ear and eye apparatuses which can not be attributed to God. What man knows about the Creator is only what little He has revealed to him through His prophets. Therefore, man is obliged to stay within these narrow limits. When man gives free rein to his intellect in describing God, he is liable to fall into errors by assigning to Allaah the attributes of His creation.

In their love of pictorial representations, Christians have painted, carved and molded innumerable human likenesses and called them images of God. These have served to pave the way for the acceptance of Jesus' divinity among the masses. Once they accepted the conception of the Creator as being like a human being, accepting Jesus as God presented no real problem.

4. The fourth aspect of *Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat* requires that man not be given the attributes of Allaah. For example, in the New Testament Paul takes the figure of Melchizedek, king of Salem, from the Torah (Genesis 14:18-20) and gives both him and Jesus the divine attribute of having no beginning or end,

"1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,2 and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.3 **He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the son of God he continues a priest forever.**"[28]
"5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, 'Thou art my son, today I have begotten thee'; 6 as he says also in another place, 'Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek'.[29]

Most *Shi'ite* sects (with the exception of the *Zaidites* of Yemen) have given their *"Imaams"* divine attributes of absolute infallibility,[30] knowledge of the past, the future and the unseen, the ability to change destiny[31] and control over the atoms of creation.[32] In so doing they set up rivals who share God's unique attributes and who, in fact, become gods besides Allaah.

5. Maintaining the unity of Allaah's names also means that Allaah's names in the definite form cannot be given to His creation unless preceded by the prefix *'Abd* meaning "slave of" or "servant of'. Many of the Divine names in their indefinite form like *Ra'oof* and *Raheem* are allowable names for men because Allaah has used some of them in their indefinite forms to refer to the Prophet (saws):

"A messenger has come to you from among yourselves to whom anything which burdens you is grievous. He is full of concern for you and is full of pity (Ra'oof) and full of mercy (Raheem)".[33]

But *ar-Ra'oof* (the One Most Full of Pity) and *ar-Raheem* (the Most Merciful) can only be used to refer to men if they are preceded by *'Abd* as in *'Abdur-Ra'oof* or *'Abdur-Raheem*, since in the definite form they represent a level of perfection which only belongs to God. Similarly, names like *'Abdur-Rasool* (slave of the messenger), *'Abdun-Nabee* (slave of the Prophet), *'Abdul-Husayn* (slave of Husayn), etc.,where people name themselves slaves to other than Allaah are also

forbidden. Based on this principle, the Prophet (saws) forbade Muslims from referring to those put under their charge as *'Abdee* (my slave) or *Amatee* (my slave girl).34

Tawheed al-'Ebaadah (Maintaining The Unity of Worship)

In spite of the wide implications of the first two categories of *Tawheed*, firm belief in them alone is not sufficient to fulfill the Islamic requirements of *Tawheed*. *Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat* must be accompanied by their complement, *Tawheed al-'Ebaadah*, in order for *Tawheed* to be considered complete according to Islaam. This point is substantiated by the fact that Allaah Himself has related in clear terms that the *Mushrikoon* (idolators) of the Prophet's time confirmed many aspects of the first two forms of *Tawheed*. In the Qur'aan Allaah tells the Prophet (saws) to say to the pagans:

"Say: 'Who is it that gives you all sustenance from the sky and earth, governs sight and hearing, brings forth life from dead (matter) and death from the living, and plans the affairs of man?' They will all say 'Allaah'."35
"If you asked them who created them, they would surely say, 'Allaah' "36
"If you asked them who brings down water from the sky and with it brings the earth to life after its death? They will most certainly say, 'Allaah'."37

The pagan Makkans all knew that Allaah was their creator, sustainer, their Lord and Master yet that knowledge did not make them Muslims according to God. In fact, Allaah said:

"Most of them do not believe in Allaah except while joining partners to Him."38

Mujaahid's39 commentary on this verse was as follows: "Their belief in Allaah represented by their statement, 'Allaah created us, provides for us and takes our lives', did not stop them from worshipping other gods along with Allaah."40 From the previously mentioned verses, it is clear that the *Kuffaar* (disbelievers) knew of Allaah's sovereignty, dominion and power. In fact, they used to faithfully devote various types of worship to Him like Hajj, charity, animal sacrifices, vows and even prayers in times of dire necessity and calamity. They even used to claim that they were following the religion of Abraham. Because of that claim, Allaah revealed the verse:

"Abraham was not a Jew nor was he a Christian, but (he) was a true Muslim and not among those who joined partners with Allaah."41

Some pagan Makkans even believed in the Resurrection and the Judgement and others in predestination (*Qadar*). Ample evidence of their belief can be found in pre-Islamic poetry. For example, the poet Zuhayr was reported to have said:

"It is either delayed, placed in a book and saved for the Day of Judgement or hastened and avenged."

'Antarah was quoted as saying:

"O 'Ebil to where will you run from death, if my Lord in the sky has destined it?"42

In spite of the Makkans' confessions of *Tawheed* and their knowledge of Allaah, Allaah classified them as disbelievers (*Kuffaar*) and pagans (*Mushrikoon*) simply because they worshipped other gods along with their worship of Allaah.

Consequently, the most important aspect of *Tawheed* is that of *Tawheed al-'Ebaadah*, maintaining the unity of Allaah's worship. All forms of worship must be directed only to Allaah because He alone deserves worship, and it is He alone who can grant benefit to man as a result of His worship. Furthermore, there is no need for any form of intercessor or intermediary between man and God. Allaah emphasized the importance of directing worship to Him alone by pointing out that this was the main purpose of man's creation and the essence of the message brought by all the prophets. Allaah says:

"I did not create the Jinn and Mankind except for My worship."43
"Verily, We have sent to every nation a messenger (saying), 'Worship Allaah and avoid false gods'."44

Understanding the purpose of creation in a complete sense is beyond man's innate abilities. Man is a finite created being and can not reasonably hope to fully comprehend the actions of the infinite Creator. Hence, God made it a part of man's nature to worship Him, and He sent prophets and books of divine revelation to clarify the aspect of the purpose of creation which was within man's mental ability to grasp. That purpose is, as was previously mentioned: the worship of God (*'Ebaadah*) and the main message of the prophets was to worship God alone, *Tawheed al-'Ebaadah*. Consequently, the gravest sin is *Shirk*, the worship of others instead of Allaah or along with Allaah. In Soorah al-Faatihah, which every Muslim is required to recite in his or her prayers at least seventeen times daily, verse four reads, **"You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek help"**. A clear statement that all forms of worship should only be directed to the One who can respond, Allaah. The Prophet Muhammad (saws) confirmed the concept of unity of worship saying, *"If you ask in prayer ask only Allaah, and if you seek help, seek it only from Allaah."*45 The absence of any need for intercession is further emphasized by the many verses indicating His closeness to man. For example:

"When My servants ask you (O Muhammad) about Me (tell them), 'Verily I am close (to them), I listen to the prayer of every one who calls on Me. So let them respond to Me and believe In Me in order that they may he guided aright."46
"It is We who created man and We know what his soul whispers to him, for We are nearer to him than his jugular vein."47

The confirmation of *Tawheed al-'Ebaadah* conversely necessitates the denial of all forms of intercession or association of partners with

Allaah. If someone prays to the dead seeking their influence on the lives of the living or the souls of those who have passed away, they have associated a partner with Allaah, because worship is being shared between Allaah and His creation. The Prophet Muhammad (saws) said, in no uncertain terms, *"Prayer (du'aa) is worship."*4The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)

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8 And, Allaah, Most Great and Glorious, said:

'Do not worship besides Allaah that which can not help or harm you."49
"Those on whom you call besides Allaah are only slaves like yourselves."50

If someone prays to the Prophet (saws), to so-called saints, *Jinns* or angels asking for help or asking them to request help from Allaah for them, they have also committed *Shirk*. The concept of "Ghaus-i-Azam" (*al-Ghawth al-A'dHam*), a title given by the ignorant to 'Abdul-Qaadir al-Jeelaanee,51 is also an expression of *Shirk* in this form of *Tawheed*. The title literally means "the greatest source of rescue; the one most able to save someone from danger" and such a description only belongs to Allaah. When misfortune occurs, some people call on 'Abdul-Qaadir by this title seeking his aid and protection even though Allaah has already said:

"If Allaah allows harm to befall you none can. remove it except Him." 52

According to the Qur'aan, when the Makkans were questioned about directing their prayers to their idols, they answered,

"We only worship them so that they may bring us closer to Allaah."[53]

The idols were only used as intermediaries yet Allaah called them pagans for their practice. Those among Muslims who insist on praying to other than Allaah would do well to reflect on this fact.

Christians, influenced by the teachings of Saul from Tarsus (later called Paul), deified Prophet Jesus and directed their prayer to him and his mother. The Catholics among Christians have saints for every occasion to whom they direct their prayers in the belief that these saints can directly influence the affairs of this world. The Catholics also use their priests as intercessors between themselves and Allaah in the mistaken belief that the priests are closer to Allaah due to their celibacy and piety, and thus more likely to be listened to by Allaah. Most *Shi'ite* sects have devoted certain days of the week and hours of the day for prayer to 'Alee, Faatimah, Hasan and Husayn54 due to their distorted belief in intercession.

Worship (*'Ebaadah*) in the Islamic view, includes more than just fasting, paying *Zakaah*, Hajj and animal sacrifices. It includes emotions like love, trust, and fear, all of which have degrees which should only be directed to God. Allaah has addressed these emotions and warned against excesses in them as follows:

"There are among men those who take (for worship) others besides Allaah as equals to Him. They love them as they should only love Allaah. But those who believe have a much greater love of Allaah..."[55]
"Will you not fight people who broke their oaths, plotted to expel the messenger and were the first to (attack) you? Do you fear them? Allaah has more right to be feared if you are truly believers."56
"Put your trust in Allaah if you are truly believers."[57]

Since the term *'Ebaadah* means total obedience and Allaah is considered the ultimate Lawgiver, the implementation of secular legal systems not based on divine law (*Sharee'ah*) is an act of disbelief in the divine law and belief in the correctness of such systems, such a belief constitutes a form of worshipping other than Allaah (*Shirk*). Allaah said in the Qur'aan:

"Those who do not rule by what Allaah has revealed are disbelievers *(Kaafiroon)*. "[58]

On one occasion, the Prophet's companion 'Adee ibn Haatim, who was a convert from Christianity, heard the Prophet (saws) recite the Qur'anic verse, ***"They have taken their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allaah,"***[59] *so he said: 'Surely we did not worship them,' The Prophet (saws) turned to him and said 'Did they not make forbidden (Haraam) what Allaah had made allowable (Halaal)60, and you all made it Haraam, and did they not make Halaal what Allaah made Haraam61 and you all made it Halaal?' He replied, 'We certainly did.' The Prophet (saws) then said, 'That was how you worshipped them'."62*

Hence, a significant part of *Tawheed al-'Ebaadah* involves the implementation of *Sharee'ah*, especially in lands where Muslims form the majority of the population. Divine law has to be re-

introduced in the many so-called Muslim countries where governments now rule according to imported capitalist or communist constitutions, and Islamic law is either totally extinct or relegated to a few areas of minor importance. Likewise, Muslim countries, where Islamic law is on the books but secular laws are in force, have also to be brought in line with the *Sharee'ah* as it pertains to all aspects of life. The acceptance of non-Islamic rule in place of *Sharee'ah* in Muslim lands is *Shirk* and an act of *Kufr*. Those in a position to change it must do so, while those unable to do so must speak out against the rule of *Kufr* and call for the implementation of *Sharee'ah*. If even this becomes impossible, un-Islamic government must be sincerely hated and despised for the pleasure of God and the upholding of *Tawheed*.

2. CHAPTER ON THE CATEGORIES OF SHIRK

The study of *Tawheed* cannot be considered complete without a careful analysis of its opposite, *Shirk*. Some mention of *Shirk* has already been made in the previous chapter and examples of it have been given to illustrate how *Tawheed* may be obliterated. However, in this chapter *Shirk* will be looked at as a separate topic whose grave importance Allaah has attested to in the Qur'aan,

"Surely Allaah will not forgive the association of partners (Shirk) with Him, but He forgives (sins) less than that of whomever He wishes."63

Because the sin of *Shirk* denies the very purpose of man's creation, it is to God the gravest of sins; the unforgivable sin.

Shirk literally means partnership, sharing or associating,64 but Islamically it refers to the act of assigning partners to Allaah in whatever form it may take. The following analysis of *Shirk* is according to the three broad categories developed in the study of *Tawheed*. Hence, we will first look at the main ways in which *Shirk* can occur in the area of *Ruboobeeyah* (Lordship), then *Asmaa was-Sifaat* (Divine Names and Attributes) and finally in *'Ebaadah* (Worship).

Shirk in Ruboobeeyah

This category of *Shirk* refers to either the belief that others share Allaah's Lordship over creation as His equal or near equal, or to the belief that there exists no Lord over creation at all. Most religious systems fall into the first aspect of *Shirk* in *Ruboobeeyah* while it is the philosophers and their man-made philosophies who tend to fill the second aspect.

(A) Shirk by Association

Beliefs which fall under this sub-category are ones in which a main God or Supreme Being over creation is recognized, however His dominion is shared by other lesser gods, spirits, mortals, heavenly bodies or earthly objects. Such belief systems are commonly referred to by theologians and philosophers as either monotheistic (having one God) or polytheistic (having more than one God). According to Islaam, all of these systems are polytheistic and many represent various

degrees in the degeneration of divinely revealed religious systems all of which were originally based on *Tawheed*.

Within Hinduism, the Supreme Being *Brahman* is conceived as indwelling, all-pervading, unchangeable and eternal, the abstract impersonal Absolute, in which all things have their origin and end. While the god *Brahma* is the personified creator of the universe who forms a trinity with the preserver god, *Vishnu* and the destroyer god, *Shiva*.65 Thus, *Shirk* in *Ruboobeeyah* is expressed in Hinduism by the delegation of God's creative, destructive and preservative powers to other gods.

Christian belief states that the one God reveals himself in the three persons of Father, Son (Jesus Christ) and *Holy Spirit*. These three persons are nevertheless regarded as a unity, sharing one 'substance'.66 Prophet Jesus is elevated to divinity, sits on the right hand of God and judges the world. The *Holy Spirit*, who in the Hebrew Bible is the means by which God exercises his creative power, in Christian thought becomes a part of the God-head. Paul made the *Holy Spirit* the alter ego of Christ, the guide and help of Christians, first manifesting itself on the day of Penecost.67 Consequently, *Shirk* in *Ruboobeeyah* occurs in the Christian belief that Jesus and the *Holy Spirit* are God's partners in all of His dominion, in their belief that Jesus alone pronounces judgement on the world and in their belief that Christians are helped and guided by the *Holy Spirit*.

Zoroastrians (Parsis) conceive of God, *Ahura Mazda*, as being the creator of all that is good, and is alone worthy of absolute worship. Fire is one of the seven creations of *Ahura Mazda* and is considered his son or representative. But they also commit *Shirk* in *Ruboobeeyah* by conceiving of evil, violence and death as being the creation of another god called *Angra Mainyu* whom they represent by the symbol darkness.68 Hence, God's sovereignty over all creation (i.e. His *Ruboobeeyah*) is shared with an evil spirit elevated to the level of an opposing god due to man's desire to not attribute evil to God.

In the Yoruba religion, followed by over 10 million people in West Africa (mainly Nigeria), there is one supreme God, *Olorius* (Lord of Heaven) or *Olodumare*. Nevertheless, modern Yoruba religion is characterized by a multitude of *Orisha* worship, so that Yoruba religion appears as strict polytheism.69 Consequently, Yorubas commit *Shirk* in *Ruboobeeyah* by turning over all of God's functions to minor gods and spirits.

The Zulus of South Africa believe in one God, *Unkulunkulu*, meaning the ancient, the first, the most revered one. The principal specific titles for God are; *Nkosi yaphezulu* (Lord-of-the-Sky) and *uMvelingqanqi* (the first to appear). Their Supreme Being is represented as a male, who, along with the earth female, bring forth the human world. Thunder and Lightening are in Zulu religion acts of God, whereas sickness and other troubles in life may be caused by the ancestors, the *"Idlozi"* or *"abaphansi"* (those under the earth). The ancestors also protect the living, ask for food, are pleased with ritual and sacrifice, punish neglect and take possession of fortune tellers (*inyanga*).70 Thus, *Shirk* in *Ruboobeeyah* takes place in the Zulu religion not only in their concept of the creation of the human world but also their attribution of good and evil in human life to the work of ancestral spirits.

Among some Muslim people, *Shirk* in *Ruboobeeyah* is manifested in their belief that the souls of saints and other righteous humans can affect the affairs of this world, even after their deaths. Their souls, it is believed, can fulfill one's needs, remove calamities and aid whoever calls on them. Therefore, grave worshippers assign to human souls the divine ability to cause events in this life which in fact only Allaah can cause.

Common among many *Sufis* (Muslim mystics) is the belief in "*Rijaal al-Ghayb*"71, chief of whom occupies the station called *"Qutub"* from which the affairs of this world are governed.72

(B) Shirk by Negation

This sub-category represents the various philosophies and ideologies which deny the existence of God either explicitly or implicitly. That is, in some cases God's non-existence is stated (Atheism), while in other cases His existence is claimed, but the way in which He is conceived actually denies His existence (Pantheism).

There are a few ancient religious "systems" in which God does not exist, foremost among them is the system attributed to Gautama Buddha. Buddhism, a reformist movement in Hinduism opposed to the caste system, was founded in the 6th century BC during the same period as Jainism. During the 3rd century BC it became the state religion. Eventually it was assimilated by Hinduism, Buddha himself becoming one of the *Avatars* (incarnations of God). It disappeared from India but became dominant in China and other Eastern nations. *Hinayana* Buddhism (400-250 BC), the earlier and more strict of the two interpretations of Buddhism which arose after Gautama Buddha's death, makes it clear that there is no God; hence the burden of salvation belongs to the individual alone.73 Thus, this ancient strain of Buddhism could be classified as an example of *Shirk* in *Ruboobeeyah* wherein God's existence is explicitly denied.

Similarly in the teachings of Jainism as systematized by Vardhamana, there is no God, but liberated souls achieve something of this status, having immortality and omniscience; and the religious community treats the liberated ones as though they were divine, building temples to them and venerating their images.74

Another ancient example is that of the Pharaoh of Prophet Moses' time. Allaah mentioned in the Qur'aan that he negated the existence of God and claimed to Moses and the people of Egypt that he, Pharaoh, was the only true lord of all creation. Allaah quoted him as saying to Moses, **"If you chose a god besides me, I will surely imprison you"**75 and to the people, **"He proclaimed, 'I am your Lord, the Most High'"**76

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a number of European philosophers asserted the non-existence of God in what became know as the "death of God philosophy". The German philosopher Philipp Mainlander (1841-1876) in his principal writing, *The Philosophy of Redemption*, 1876, states that the world begins with the death of God, since God is a principle of unity shattered in the plurality of the world and a principle of joy denied in the law of suffering which dominates the world.77 In Prussia Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) supported the idea of the "death of God" proposing that God was nothing more than a projection of man's uneasy conscience and that man was the bridge to the Superman.78 Jean Paul Sartre, a French philosopher

of the twentieth century also echoed the "death of God" thought. He claimed that God could not exist because He was a contradiction in terms. The idea of God, according to him, is a projection which man must make being what he is.79

Darwin's (d. 1882) proposal that man was merely a glorified ape was widely adopted in the theories of social scientists and philosophers of the nineteenth century as it provided a "scientific" basis for the non-existence of God. According to them religion evolved from animism to monotheism along with man's supposed social evolution from an independent individual to a national state and his physical evolution from ape to man.

They attempt to escape the questions surrounding creation by claiming that there was none and by attributing Allaah's attribute of being without beginning and end to matter which He has created. Present day holders of this belief are the followers of Karl Marx, communists and scientific socialists, who claim that the origin of everything in existence is matter in motion. They further claim that God is a figment of man's imagination created by the ruling classes to justify their hereditary rule and divert the attention of the oppressed masses from the realities in which they live.

An example of this form of *Shirk* among some Muslims is that of many *Sufis* like Ibn 'Arabee who claim that only Allaah exists (All is Allaah, and Allaah is all). They deny the separate existence of Allaah and thereby in fact deny His existence. This idea was also expressed in the 17th century by the Dutch Jewish philosopher, Baruch Spinoza, who claimed that God is the total of all parts of the universe including man.

Shirk in Ruboobeeyah

This category of *Shirk* refers to either the belief that others share Allaah's Lordship over creation as His equal or near equal, or to the belief that there exists no Lord over creation at all. Most religious systems fall into the first aspect of *Shirk* in *Ruboobeeyah* while it is the philosophers and their man-made philosophies who tend to fill the second aspect.

(A) Shirk by Association

Beliefs which fall under this sub-category are ones in which a main God or Supreme Being over creation is recognized, however His dominion is shared by other lesser gods, spirits, mortals, heavenly bodies or earthly objects. Such belief systems are commonly referred to by theologians and philosophers as either monotheistic (having one God) or polytheistic (having more than one God). According to Islaam, all of these systems are polytheistic and many represent various degrees in the degeneration of divinely revealed religious systems all of which were originally based on *Tawheed*.

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Shirk in al-Asmaa was-Sifaat

Shirk in this category includes both the common pagan practise of giving Allaah the attributes of His creation as well as the act of giving created beings Allaah's names and attributes.

(A) Shirk by Humanization

In this aspect of *Shirk* in *al-Asmaa was-Sifaat*, Allaah is given the form and qualities of human beings and animals. Due to man's superiority over animals, the human form is more commonly used by idolaters to represent God in creation. Consequently, the image of the Creator is often painted, moulded or carved in the shape of human beings possessing the physical features of those who worship them. For example, Hindus and Buddhists worship countless idols in the likeness of Asian men and consider them manifestations of God in creation. Modern day Christian belief that Prophet Jesus was God incarnate; that the Creator became His creation, is another good example of this type of *Shirk*. There have been many so-called great Christian painters like Michaelangelo (d. 1565), who painted pictures of God as a naked old European man with long flowing white hair and beard on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. These pictures have in turn, been held by the Christian world in the highest of esteem.

(B) Shirk by Deification

This form of *Shirk* in *al-Asmaa was-Sifaat* relates to cases where created beings or things are given or claim Allaah's names or His attributes. For example, it was the practice of the ancient Arabs to worship idols whose names were derived from the names of Allaah. Their main three idols were: al-Laat taken from Allaah's name al-Elaah, al-'Uzza taken from al-'Azeez and al-Manaat taken from al-Mannaan. During the Prophet Muhammad's era there was also a false prophet in a region of Arabia called Yamaamah, who took the name *Rahmaan* which only belongs to Allaah.

Among the *Shi'ite* sects is the *Nusayreeyah* of Syria, who believe that the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, 'Alee ibn Abee Taalib, was a manifestation of Allaah and give him many of Allaah's qualities. Among them is also the *Ismai'ils* also know as Agha Khanis who consider their leader, the Agha Khan, to be God incarnate. Also included in this category are the *Druze* of

Lebanon who believe that the Faatimid Caliph al-Haakim bi Amrillaah, was the last manifestation of Allaah among mankind.

Claims of *Sufis* (muslim mystics) like al-Hallaaj that they have become one with God and as such exist as manifestations of the Creator within His creation may also be included in this aspect of *Shirk* in *al-Asmaa was-sifaat*. Modern-day spiritualists and mediums like Shirley Maclaine, J.Z. Knight, etc., often claim divinity for themselves as well as mankind in general. Einstein's Theory of Relativity (E = mc2, Energy is equal to mass times the square of the speed of light) taught in all schools is in fact an expression of *Shirk* in *al-Asmaa was-Sifaat*. The theory states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed; it merely transforms into matter and vice versa. However, both matter and energy are created entities and they both will be destroyed as Allaah clearly states:

"Allaah is the creator of all things..."[80]
"Everything in (the world) will perish..."[81]

The theory also implies that mass and energy are eternal having no beginning or end since they are supposed to be uncreated and transform into each other. However, this attribute belongs only to Allaah who alone is without beginning or end.

[MSA-USC Editor's note: Understand that the author is pointing out a flaw in an informal part of the theory of relativity, that is, that matter and energy are eternal. The author is not arguing against the mathematical relationship between these two, but rather against their independence from Allaah's all-encompassing power - both creative and destructive.]

Darwin's theory of evolution is also an attempt to explain the evolution of life and its forms from lifeless matter without the intervention of God. One of the leading Darwinists of this century, Sir Aldous Huxley expressed this thought as follows:

"Darwinism removed the whole idea of God as the creator of organisms from the sphere of national discussion."[82]

Shirk In al-'Ebaadah

In this category of *Shirk*, acts of worship are directed to other than God and the reward for worship is sought from the creation instead of the Creator. As in the case of the previous categories, *Shirk* in *al-'Ebaadah* has two main aspects.

(A) Ash-Shirk al-Akbar (Major Shirk):

This form of *Shirk* occurs when any act of worship is directed to other than Allaah. It represents the most obvious form of idolatry which the prophets were specifically sent by Allaah to call the masses of mankind away from. This concept is supported by Allaah's statement in the Qur'aan:

"Surely we have sent to every nation a messenger saying, worship Allaah and avoid Taaghoot (false gods)"[83]

Taaghoot actually means anything which is worshipped along with Allaah or instead of Allaah. For example, love is a form of worship which, in its perfection, should only be directed to Allaah. In Islaam, the love of God is expressed by total obedience to Him. It is not the type of love which man naturally feels toward creation; towards parents, children, food, etc. To direct that type of love towards God is to lower Him to the level of His creation which is *Shirk* in *al-Asmaa was-Sifaat*. Love which is worship is the total surrender of one's will to God. Consequently, Allaah told the Prophet (saws) to tell the believers:

"Say: If you love Allaah, follow me and Allaah will love you."[84]

The Prophet (saws) also told his companions, *"None of you is a true believer until I become more beloved to him than his child, his father and the whole of mankind"*.85 Love of the Prophet (saws) is not based on his humanity but on the divine origin of his message. Thus, like the love of Allaah, it is also expressed by total obedience to his commands.

Allaah said in the final revelation:

"Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allaah,"[86]

and

"Say: Obey Allaah and obey the Prophet..."[87]

If man allows the love of anything or anyone to come between himself and Allaah, then he has worshipped that thing. In this way, money can become one's god or even one's desires could become a god. The Prophet (saws) said, *"The worshipper of the Dirham will always be miserable"*88 and Allaah said in the Qur'aan

"Have you not seen the one who takes his desires as his god?"[89]

Much emphasis has been placed on the evils of *Shirk* in *'Ebaadah* (worship) because it contradicts the very purpose of creation as expressed in Allaah's statement:

"I have not created Jinn or mankind except for my worship."[90]

Major *Shirk* represents the greatest act of rebellion against the Lord of the Universe, and is thus the ultimate sin. It is a sin so great that it virtually cancels out all good a person may do and guarantees its perpetrator eternal damnation in Hell. Consequently, false religion is based primarily on this form of *Shirk*. All man-made systems in one way or another invite their followers to the worship of creation. Christians are called upon to pray to a man, a Prophet of God named Jesus, whom they claim to have been God incarnate. Catholics among Christians pray to Mary as the "mother of God", to the angels like Michael who is honored on May 8 and September 29, Michaelmas Day, as St. Michael,91 as well as to human saints, whether real or fictitious.

Muslims whose acts of worship fall into this category of *Shirk* are those who pray to Prophet Muhammad (saws) or to mystics in the *Sufi* hierarchy of saints believing that they can answer their prayers, though Allaah has clearly said in the Qur'aan:

"Say: Think to yourselves, if Allaah's punishment came upon you or the Final Hour, would you then call on other than Allaah? (Reply) if you are truthful."92

(B) Ash-Shirk al-Asghar (Minor Shirk):

Mabmood ibn Lubayd reported, "Allaah's messenger (saws) said: *"The thing I fear for you the most is* ash-Shirk al-Asghar *(minor shirk)." The companions asked "Oh! messenger of Allaah, what is minor Shirk?" He replied "*Ar-Riyaa *(showing off), for verily Allaah will say on the Day of Resurrection when people are receiving their rewards, 'Go to those for whom you were showing off in the material world and see if you can find any reward from them.'"*93

Mahmood ibn Lubayd also said, *"The Prophet (saws) came out and announced, 'O people, beware of secret* Shirk*!' The people asked, 'O messenger of Allaah, what is secret* Shirk*?' He replied, 'When a man gets up to pray and strives to beautify his prayer because people are looking at him; that is secret* Shirk*.'"*94

Ar-Riyaa

Riyaa is the practise of performing any of the various forms of worship in order to be seen and praised by people. This sin destroys all the benefits that lie in righteous deeds and brings on the one who commits it a serious punishment. It is particularly dangerous, because it is natural for man to desire and enjoy the praise of his fellow men. Doing religious acts to impress people or in order to be praised by them is, therefore, an evil which deserves man's utmost caution. This danger is really significant to the believers whose goal is to make all of the acts of their lives religious acts dedicated to God. In fact, the likelihood that knowledgable true believers would commit *ash-Shirk al-Akbar* is small, since its pitfalls are so obvious. But, for the true believer like everyone else, the chance of committing *Riyaa* is great because it is so hidden. It only involves the simple act of changing one's intention. The motivating forces behind it are also very strong, since it comes from man's inner nature. Ibn 'Abbaas alluded to this reality when he said, *"Shirk is more hidden than a black ant creeping on a black stone in the middle of a moonless night."*95

Thus, great care has to be taken to ensure that one's intentions begin pure and remain pure whenever righteous deeds are being done. In order to ensure this, the saying of Allaah's name is enjoined in Islaam before all acts of importance. A series of *Du'aas* (informal prayers) have also been prescribed by the Prophet (saws) before and after all natural habits like eating, drinking, sleeping, sex, and even going to the toilet, in order to turn these everyday habits into acts of worship and develop in Muslims a keen awareness of Allaah. It is this awareness, called *Taqwaa*, which ultimately insures that intentions remain pure.

The Prophet (saws) also provided protection against the inevitable acts of *Shirk* by teaching certain specific prayers which may be said anytime. Abu Moosaa said, *"One day Allaah's messenger delivered a sermon saying 'O people, fear Shirk for it is more hidden than the creeping of an ant.'*

Those whom Allaah wished asked, 'And how do we avoid it when it is more hidden than the creeping of an ant, O Messenger of Allaah?' He replied, 'Say: Allaahumma Innaa na'oodhu bika an nushrika bika shay'an na'lamuh, wa nastaghfiruka limaa laa na'lamuh (O Allaah, we seek refuge in you from knowingly committing shirk with you and we ask your forgiveness for what we do not know about).'"96

In the following chapters a more detailed look will be taken of the most prominent areas in which *Shirk* in all its three aspects most commonly occurs.

10. CHAPTER ON SAINT WORSHIP

Allaah's Favor:

It is a part of man's nature to elevate some human beings over others. He likes to hold them in high esteem and prefers to follow them rather than make decisions on his own. This is a direct result of the fact that Allaah has favored some people over others, in various ways. Man has been placed over woman socially:

"Men are guardians of women by that which Allaah favored some of them over others"97
"And men are one level over women."98

And some men have been placed over other men economically:

"Allaah has favored some of you over others with sustenance."99

The tribe of Israel was favored over the rest of mankind by divine guidance:

"Remember, Oh Israel, the blessing which I bestowed on you by favoring you over all mankind."100

The prophets were favored over all mankind by revelation and Allaah favored some of the prophets over others:

"Those are the prophets of whom We favored some over others."101

Yet Allaah has told us not to desire the things by which He has favored some of mankind over others

"Do not wish for that with which We have favored some of you over others."102

because these favors are tests which carry with them great responsibilities. They are not a result of man's strivings, and, as such, should not be a source of pride. Allaah will not give us a reward for having them, although we will be held to account for how we used them. Thus, Allaah's Messenger

advised us, *"Look at those below you and not those above you. It is better for you, so that you do not deny Allaah's blessings on you."*103

Everyone has been placed above others in some way or another, and everyone has certain responsibilities for which he will be held accountable. The Prophet (saws) said, *"Everyone of you is a shepherd, and everyone is responsible for his flock."*104 These responsibilities are the basic components of the tests of this life. If we are thankful to Allaah for His favors and apply them justly, we succeed; otherwise, we fail. But, perhaps the greatest test of responsibility is that of Allaah's favoring man over all creation. This favor was confirmed by Allaah's command to the angels to prostrate to Aadam and the responsibility is twofold:

a. It carries a personal responsibility of accepting Islaam: total submission to Allaah.

b. It also carries a group commitment of establishing Allaah's law throughout the earth.

Thus, believers are far superior to disbelievers in Allaah's sight because of their acceptance of their responsibilities. Allaah said:

"You (believers) are the best of nations brought forth for the benefit of mankind (because) you command the good, prohibit evil and believe in Allaah."105

Taqwaa:

Among the community of believers, some are superior to others; and this superiority is a direct result of their own strivings. It is a superiority linked to *Eemaan*, the strength and depth of faith. A living faith drives the one who possesses it to shield himself from whatever displeases Allaah. This shield in Arabic is called "*Taqwaa*." It has been variously translated as "fear of God", "piety", as well as "God-consciousness"; and it carries all these meanings and more. Allaah clearly expressed the superiority of *Taqwaa* as follows:

"Verily the most noble among you Is the one with the most **Taqwaa.**"106

Allaah is here saying that the only factor which makes a believing man or woman truly superior to another is the level of *Taqwaa*. It is this piety or fear of God which elevates man from the level of "thinking animal" to that of governor (*Khaleefah*) of the planets. The importance of the fear of Allaah in a Muslim's life cannot be overstressed. Allaah mentioned *Taqwaa* and its derivatives 26 times in the Qur'aan, everywhere emphasizing that *Taqwaa* is the driving force behind living faith. Without it, faith is only a meaningless jumble of memorized words and phrases, and 'righteous' deeds only shells of pretense and hypocrisy. Consequently, piety is preferred over all other considerations in all of life's transactions. The Messenger of Allaah (saws) said: *"A woman is married for four (reasons): her wealth, her nobility, her beauty, and her piety. Choose the pious one and be successful."*107 No matter how beautiful, rich or well bred a woman might be, if she is not pious, she is inferior to a pious, ugly, poor woman from a dishonorable family. The converse is also true, as the Prophet (saws) said, *"If a man whose practise of the religion satisfies you, asks you for your daughter in marriage, you should marry them; otherwise there will be corruption in the land."*108

The Prophet (saws) once reprimanded Abu Dharr for derisively calling Bilal, 'son of a black woman', then he went on to say, *"Look! Surely you are not better than a brown man nor a black man except by fearing Allaah more than them."*[109] This understanding was hammered home time and time again by Allaah's messenger (saws). Even in the Farewell Pilgrimage, done shortly before he died, he lectured the people on the insignificance of racial differences and the all importance of *Taqwaa*.

The most pious individuals are only known to Allaah, because the seat of *Taqwaa* is the heart. Man can only judge people by each other's outward deeds which may or may not be misleading. Allaah made that abundantly clear in the following verse:

"There is among people in this life, he whose speech will dazzle you. And he will call on Allaah as a witness to what is in his heart; yet, he will be among the most vicious of enemies."[110]

Therefore, it is not permissible for humans to designate certain people as being particularly saintly and pious to a degree beyond the reach of ordinary humans. The Prophet Muhammad (saws) specified among his companions (*Sahaabah*) some whom he gave glad tidings of paradise in this life.[111] However, such pronouncements were based on revelation and not his own ability to judge the hearts. For example, when the Prophet (saws) said concerning those who make a pledge of allegiance known as *Bay'ah ar-Ridwaan, "No one who made the pledge beneath the tree will enter the hellfire,"*[112] he was confirming the Qur'anic verse revealed to that effect:

"Allaah is pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you beneath the tree..."[113]

Similarly, he judged some whom everyone thought were destined to paradise to be among those destined for the hellfire. All such judgements were based on revelation. Ibn 'Abbaas said that he was told by 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab that *on the day of (the battle) of Khaybar, some of the Prophet's companions came and said, "So and so is a martyr and so and so is a martyr," but when they came to a man about whom they said, "So and so is a martyr," Allaah's messenger declared, "By no means! I have seen him in hell in a cloak which he took (from the spoils) dishonestly." Allaah's messenger then said, "Go, Ibn al-Khattaab, and announce among the people three times that only the believers will enter paradise."*[114]

In Christian tradition down through the ages, some individuals were highly praised for their supposed spiritual achievements. Miracles were attributed to them and the rank of "saint" was bestowed on them. In pre-Christian Hindu and Buddhist tradition, teachers who were supposed to have climbed the ladder of spiritual excellence and who had performed supernatural feats were also given titles like *Guru*, *Avatar*, etc., indicating spiritual superiority. These designations have led the masses to either seek intercession through them or to worship them as gods. Consequently, these religious traditions have lists of saints to whom the masses fervently pray. Islaam, on the other hand, opposes even the excessive praise of.Prophet Muhammad (saws) who said, *"Do not praise me excessively as the Christians did to 'Eesaa ibn Maryam, verily I am only a slave, so call me instead the slave of Allaah and His messenger."*[115]

Walee: The "Saint"

The term saint has been used to translate the Arabic word *Walee* (pl. *Awliyaa*) which Allaah used, to designate those who are close to Him. But, a more appropriate translation is "close friend" because *Walee* literally means an "ally." Allaah even uses it to refer to Himself in the verse:

"Allaah is the Walee of those who believe and takes them from the darkness into light."116

He also uses it to refer to Satan as in the verse:

"Whoever takes Satan as a Walee instead of Allaah, has clearly lost all."117

This term also means "close relative" as in the following verse:

"We have given power to the Walee of whoever is wrongly killed, but do not be excessive in the execution (of the murderer)."118

It is also used in Qur'aan to indicate closeness between men, for example,

"The believers should not take the disbelievers as Awliyaa instead of other believers."119

But the usage which concerns us most is *"Awliyaa-ullaah"* close friends of Allaah. In the Qur'aan Allaah has designated among mankind certain types of individuals whom He considers especially close to Himself. AIlaah's description of His *Walees* can be found in Soorah al-Anfaal where Allaah states:

"Verily His (Allaah's) Awliyaa are only those with Taqwaa, but most people do not realize that."120

And Soorah Younus:

"Behold! Certainly no fear nor grief shall overcome the Awliyaa of Allaah, those who believe and have **Taqwaa**."121

Allaah explains for us that the criterion for "*Walaayah*" (divine friendship) is *Eemaan* (faith) and *Taqwaa* (piety) and these qualities are shared by all true believers.122 Among the ignorant masses, the main criterion for *Walaayah* ("Sainthood") is the performance of miracles which are commonly called *Karaamaat* to distinguish them from the miracles *Mu'jizaat* of the prophets. To most who hold this belief, the faith and practise of the "miracle" worker are of no consequence. Hence, some who have been designated "saints" held heretical beliefs and practises, while others were known to have abandoned the religious rituals, and, yet others were even involved in licentious and vulgar behavior. However, nowhere has Allaah made the working of miracles a stipulation for being His

Walee. Therefore, as earlier stated, all believers who have *Eemaan* and *Taqwaa* are *Walees* of Allaah and He is their *Walee*, as Allaah Himself said,

"Allaah is the Walee of those who believe."123

Consequently, Muslims are not allowed to designate certain believers as being *Awliyaa* of Allaah and not others. In spite of this clear Islamic position, a hierarchy of so-called Muslim saints has become a prominent feature in *Sufi* circles and among the masses who blindly follow them. In ascending order of merit they are: the *Akhyaar* (chosen) who number 300; the *Abdaal* (substitutes) numbering 40; the 7 *Abraar* (pious); the 4 *Awtaad* (pegs); the 3 *Nuqabaa* (watchmen), the *Qutb* (pole) who is considered the greatest saint of his time, and at the top of the list is the *Ghawth* (Succor), the greatest of Saints, who is believed, in some circles, to be capable of taking on his shoulders a portion of the sins of the believers. According to the belief of "mystics", the saints of the top three classes are present invisibly in Makkah at the hours of prayer. When the *Ghawth* dies, the *Qutb* replaces him and there is a moving up all through the series, the purest soul of each class rising to the next degree.124 This body of mythology has been borrowed from Christianity, just as *Dhikr* beads were adopted from the Christian rosary, and *Mawlid* from the Christian celebration of Christmas.

Fanaa: The Union of Man With God

A close look at various lists of the most prominent so-called saints, reveals names like that of al-Hallaaj who was publicly executed as an apostate for daring to openly claim divinity in his infamous pronouncement "*Ana-al-Haqq*" 'I am the Reality' when Allaah already said:

"That is so, because Allaah is the Reality and it is He who gives life to the dead."125

What led this deranged individual to make such a pronouncement was his belief in a principle very similar to the ultimate state of being in Buddhism known as "*Nirvana*."126 In this state, according to a branch of Buddhist thought, the ego disappears and the human soul and consciousness are extinguished.127

This concept also forms the core of a philosophy known as "mysticism". Mysticism128 is defined as an experience of union with God and the belief that man's main goal lies in seeking that union. The origins of mysticism can be found in the writings of ancient Greek philosophers like *Plato's Symposium* in which mention is made of various ladders of ascent, composed of steep and hard steps, whereby a union of the soul with God is finally attained.129 A parallel concept can also be found in Hinduism's identification of *Atman* (human soul) with *Brahman* (the impersonal Absolute), the realization of which is the ultimate goal or release from existence and rebirth.130 Greek mystic thought blossomed in the Gnostic Christian movements which, like that of Valentinus (c. 140 CE), reached their peak in the second century CE. These trends were combined in the third century with Platonism by the Egypto-Roman philosopher, Plotinus (205-270 CE), to form a religious philosophy known as *neoplatonism*. Christian anchorites or hermits of the 3rd century CE, who began the monastic tradition in Christendom by withdrawing into the Egyptian desert, adopted the mystic goal of union with God as it was propounded in neoplatonic thought at that time, within a framework of meditative and ascetic practises of self-denial. Although it was

"St." Pachomius (290-346 CE) who established the first set of rules for Christian monasticism and founded nine monasteries in the Egyptian desert; "St." Benedict of Nursia (480-547 CE), in developing the Benedictine Rule for the monastery at Monte Cassino in Italy, came to be regarded as the real founder of Western monastic order.131

The mystic tradition kept alive in monastic Christianity began to find expression among Muslims from about 8th century CE, a century after the borders of the Islamic state had expanded to include Egypt and Syria and its major centers of monasticism.132 A group of Muslims who were not satisfied with what the *Sharee'ah* (Islamic Law) had to offer, developed a parallel system which they named the *Tareeqah* (the way). Just as the ultimate goal of the Hindu was unity with the world soul and of the Christian mystic union with God; the ultimate goal of this movement became *Fanaa*, the dissolution of the ego, and *Wusool* the meeting and unification of the human soul with Allaah in this life. A series of preliminary stages and states which had to be attained were defined. They were called *Maqaamaat* (stations) and *Haalaat* (states). A system of spiritual exercises was also designed for the initiate in order to bring about this "meeting." These exercises of *Dhikr*133 often involved head and body movements and sometimes even dance, as in the case of whirling dervishes. All of these practises were attributed to the Prophet (saws) through chains of narration in order to validate them, but there does not exist any authentic support for them in any of the classical books of *Hadeeth*. A multiplicity of systems evolved, and orders, similar to those among Christian monks, appeared named after their founders, like the *Qaadiri, Chishti, Nakhshabandi,* and *Teejaani* orders. Along with that, volumes of legends and fairy tales were spun around the founders and the outstanding personalities of these orders. And, just as Christian and Hindu monks chose special isolated structures (i.e. monasteries) in which to house their communities, the *Sufi* orders developed similar housing schemes called *Zaawiyahs* (lit. corners).

In time, a body of heretic creeds developed out of the mystic "union-with-God" belief. For example, most orders claimed that Allaah could be seen when the state of *Wusool* (arrival) was achieved. Yet when 'Aa'eshah asked the Prophet (saws) if he saw Allaah during *Mi'raaj* (ascension) he replied that he had not.134 Prophet Moosaa was also shown that neither he nor any man could withstand seeing Allaah in this life by Allaah revealing some of His being to a mountain which crumbled to dust during the revelation.135 Some Sufi adepts claimed that when the state of *Wusool* was attained, the mundane obligations of *Sharee'ah* like five times daily *Salaah*, were no longer obligatory. Most of them prescribed that prayers to Allaah could be sent through the Prophet (saws) or through the so-called saints; many also began the practice of making *Tawaaf*136, animal sacrifices and other acts of worship around the shrines and tombs of the saints. *Tawaaf* can be observed today around the grave of Zaynab and Sayyid al-Badawi in Egypt, around the tomb of Muhammad Ahmad (The *Mahdi*) in Sudan, and around the Darghas of countless saints and holy men in India and Pakistan.

The *Sharee'ah* came to be looked at as the outer path designed for the ignorant masses, while the *Tareeqah* was the inner path of an elite enlightened few. Opinionated *Tafseer* (Qur'anic commentary) appeared in which the meanings of the Qur'anic verses were bent and twisted to support the heretical ideas of the mystic movement. Greek philosophical thought was also blended with fabricated *Hadeeths* to produce a body of inauthentic literature which challenged the early Islamic classics and eventually displaced them among the masses. Music was introduced in most circles and drugs like marijuana could be found in others as a means of heightening the pseudo-

spiritual experience which they all sought. Such was the legacy of the latter generation of *Sufis* which had been built on the false premise that union of the human soul with Allaah was attainable. The early generation of pious individuals, like 'Abdul-Qaadir al-Jeelaani, and others to whom some orders were attributed, clearly understood the importance of distinguishing between the Creator and the created. The two could never become one, as One was Divine and Eternal, while the other was human and finite.

The Union of God With Man

Nothing escapes Allaah's knowledge, therefore, the wise are those who act accordingly. They feel His presence at all times. They carefully perform all their obligatory (*Fard*) duties, then they piously try to make up for any of the inevitable deficiencies by doing a host of voluntary acts. These voluntary acts help to protect the obligatory duties. For example, during times of weakness or spiritual lows, one may become lax in fulfilling one's religious duties. However, those who had voluntary practices would likely neglect some of their voluntary practices, while keeping their obligatory duties intact. If they did not have a protective shield of voluntary acts and they fell into a period of spiritual laziness, some of their obligatory duties are likely to be discarded or neglected. The more someone strengthens his obligatory practices by performing voluntary acts, the more his life conforms to the *Sharee'ah*, the will of Almighty Allaah. Allaah conveyed this principle through the Prophet (saws) in a Hadeeth saying: *"The most beloved thing with which My slave may come close to me is that which I have made obligatory (Fard) on him. My servant will continue to come closer to me by voluntary acts (of worship) until I love him. If I love him, I will be his hearing by which he hears, his sight by which he sees, his hand by which he grasps, and his foot by which he walks. If he asks Me anything I would give it and if he seeks refuge in Me I would protect him."*137

This *Walee* of Allaah would only hear, see, grasp and walk to what is *Halaal* (lawful), while conspicuously avoiding all the *Haraam* (prohibited) as well as that which leads towards it. This is the only true goal worthy of dedicating one's life. Its attainment is the perfection of man's dual role as servant of God and governor of the world. But, it cannot be reached except by the route prescribed in the *Hadeeth*. First the compulsory duties have to be completely established, then the prescribed voluntary acts of worship have to be performed consistently and according to the *Sunnah*. Allaah emphasized this fact by telling His Prophet to inform the believers:

"Say, if you love Allaah, follow me (Muhammad) and Allaah will love you."138

Therefore Allaah's love can only be attained by strictly following the directives (*Sunnah*) of His Apostle (saws) and by carefully avoiding all innovations in religious matters. This formula is contained in the following *Hadeeth* in which the Prophet (saws) was reported by Abu Najeeh to have said, *"Keep to my Sunnah and that of the rightly guided caliphs. Bite on to it with your molars. And beware of innovations, for verily they are all heresy (Bid'ah) and heresy is misguidance which leads to the hellfire."*139

One who strictly follows this principle will only listen to what Allaah wishes for him to listen to.
For Allaah said describing the righteous:

"And when the ignorant (mockingly) address them, they merely say: 'Peace'"140

Elsewhere in the Qur'aan He also said,

"He has already revealed to you in the Book, that when you hear the signs of Allaah denied and ridiculed, you should not sit with them unless they change the subject. If you did you would be like them."141

By him listening only to what Allaah wishes for him to hear, Allaah has metaphorically become his hearing. In a similar way, Allaah becomes his sight, hands and feet.

This is the correct interpretation of the previously mentioned *Hadeeth* in which Allaah states that He will become man's hearing, sight, hands and feet. Unfortunately, this *Hadeeth* has been misinterpreted by mystics as support for the concept of union with Allaah - May Allaah forbid.

Roohullaah: The "Spirit" of Allaah

Support for the mystic belief in the re-unification of the human soul with Allaah has also been falsely deduced from some of the verses of the Qur'aan itself. The following verses in which Allaah said:

"Then He (Allaah) fashioned him (Aadam) and blew in him from His spirit."142

and

"When I fashioned him and blew into him of My Spirit..."143

have been used as evidence for the belief that every human being contains within his body a part of God. The portion of Allaah's "spirit" which Allaah breathed into Aadam has supposedly been inherited by all of his descendents. Reference has also been made to Prophet 'Eesaa about whose mother Allaah said,

"She was chaste, so We blew into her from Our Spirit..."144

Thus, it is believed among mystics that this divine eternal spirit within man yearns to reunite with its origin from whence it came. However, this is not the case. Possessive pronouns (my, your, his, her, our) in Arabic, as in English, have two general meanings depending on the context in which they are used. They may describe an attribute or a possession which is or is not a part of its owner. For example, in Allaah's command to Prophet Moosaa (Moses)

"Put your hand inside your shirt and it will come out shining unharmed..."145

both the "hand" and "shirt" belonged to Prophet Moosaa but his hand was an attribute which was a part of him, while his shirt was a possession which was not a part of him. The same is the case

relative to God with regards to His attributes and His creation.146 For example, in the case of divine mercy wherein He says:

"Allaah gives His mercy specifically to whomsoever He wishes..."147

Allaah's mercy is one of his attributes and not a part of His creation. On the other hand, Allaah sometimes refers to created things as "His" to emphasize the fact that He created them. Yet others are referred to as His to indicate the special position of honor with which He views them. For example, with respect to the She-Camel sent as a test to Prophet Saalih's people, the Thamood, Allaah quoted Prophet Saalih as saying,

"This is Allaah's camel sent to you as a sign. So allow it to graze in Allaah's earth."148

The camel was miraculously sent as a sign to the Thamood who did not have any right to deny it from grazing, because the whole earth belongs to Allaah. Similarly is the case of the Ka'bah about which Allaah made a covenant with Prophets Ibraaheem (Abraham) and Ismaa'eel (Ishmael):

"That they may purify My house for those who circle it, cling to it, bow down prostrate (near it)"149

and paradise in the case of the righteous who on the Day of Judgement will be told by Allaah **"Enter My paradise."**150

As for the spirit (*Rooh*), it is one of Allaah's creations. Allaah states in the Qur'aan

"They ask you concerning the spirit, tell them the Spirit is from my Lord's command; and you have not been given except a very small amount of knowledge."151

Elsewhere in the Qur'aan He said:

"If Allaah has decided a thing, He only has to command: Be, and it is."152

And He also said:

"He (Allaah) created him (Aadam) from clay then said: Be, and he was."153

The command is "be" for all of creation. Therefore, the spirit is created by Allaah's command. Islaam does not consider God to be an incorporeal Spirit, as do some religions like Christianity. He has neither corporeal body nor is He a formless spirit. He has a form befitting His majesty, the like of which no man has ever seen or conceived, and which will only be seen (to the degree of man's finite limitations) by the people of paradise.154 Consequently, when Allaah refers to the blowing of a spirit from Himself into prophets Aadam and 'Eesaa, special honor is given to their created spirits due to the prominence of Prophet Aadam's position in relation to the rest of mankind and to

clarify the confusion concerning Maryam's virgin birth of Prophet 'Eesaa. Even Allaah's attribution of the act of blowing to Himself is, in fact, a clarification of His will and supreme power, for it is the angels who actually insert and extract the souls into man. This fact is evident from the following *Hadeeth* of Ibn Mas'oud who reported that Allaah's Messenger said, *"Verily your creation is combined in your mother's womb for forty days in the form of an oily fluid, then as a leech-like clot for a similar period and as a clump of flesh for another similar period. Then an angel is sent to him to blow the spirit into him..."*155 Thus, Allaah has the spirit blown into every human by one of His angels. By saying that 'He blew', Allaah in fact reminds us that He is the primary cause of all that takes place in creation, as He said:

"Allaah created you and whatever you do."156

Just prior to the battle of Badr the Prophet (saws) threw a handful of dust at the enemy ranks assembled hundreds of yards away, but Allaah caused some of the dust particles to miraculously reach all of the eyes of the enemy. Allaah referred to the Prophet's action as follows:

"It was not you that threw when you threw but it was Allaah who threw."157

Thus, by attributing the Spirit to Himself, Allaah simply gave it a special place of honor among the spirits which He has created. Not that He, Allaah, has a spirit and blew off a piece of it into both Prophet Aadam and Prophet 'Eesaa. To further emphasize that point Allaah also refers to the Angel sent to inform Maryam as "His spirit":

"So we sent to her Our Spirit who took the appearance of a well formed man."158

The Qur'aan is a totality. Its verses explain themselves and the sayings and practices of the Prophet (saws) further clarify its meanings. When verses are taken out of context, the meanings of the Qur'aan can easily be distorted. For example, verse four of Soorah al-Maa'oon reads:

"Woe be on those who make prayer (Salaah)."159

This verse by itself is in total contradiction to the rest of Qur'aan and Islaam. *Salaah* has been made obligatory throughout the Qur'aan, For example, Allaah said:

"Verily I am Allaah, there is no god besides me, so worship me and establish prayer (Salaah) in order to remember Me."160

Yet this verse curses those who make *Salaah*! However, the verses which follow it clarify the intended meaning as:

"Those who are negligent in their Salaah, who do it to be seen. Yet they refuse even the simplest of kindness."161

Thus, Allaah's curse is on the *Salaah* of the hypocrites who pretend belief and not on all who make *Salaah*.

A more meaningful translation of the verse *"Then He fashioned him (Aadam) and blew into him from His spirit,"* would be **"Then He fashioned him and caused one of His (noble) spirits to enter him."** Consequently, there is no basis in the divine scriptures for the mystic belief in the uncreated soul of man, yearning to re-unite with its origin, God. In Islaam, there is no distinction between the Arabic terms *Rooh* (spirit - pl. *Arwaah*) and *Nafs* (soul - pl. *Anfus*) with respect to man except that when it is connected to the body it is usually referred to as a *Nafs*. In the Qur'aan God states:

"It is Allaah who takes the souls (Anfus) at death and those which do not die (He takes) during their sleep..."162

The Prophet (saws) was reported by Umm Salamah to have said, *"Verily, when the spirit (Rooh) is taken the eyes follow it"*163

The successful souls will be made to enter paradise as Allaah said to the righteous souls

"O soul (Nafs) at peace, come back to your Lord pleased with yourself and pleasing to Him. Enter among My devotees. Enter My paradise."164

Thus, in the end, the righteous human soul will not become extinguished in God nor unite with His supreme being, but will remain a finite spirit reunited with a finite body enjoying the pleasures of paradise for as long as Allaah wishes

Footnote

1 J.M. Cowan, *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, (Spoken Language Services Inc., New York, 3rd. ed., 1976), p.1055.

2 The word *Tawheed* does not actually occur in either the Qur'aan or in the statements (*Hadeeths*) of the Prophet (~). However, when the Prophet (~) sent Mu'aadh ibn Jabal as governor of Yemen in 9AH, he told him, "You will be going to Christians and Jews (*ahl al-Kitaab*), so the first thing you should invite them to is the assertion of the oneness of Allaah (*Yuwahhidoo Allaah*)." (Narrated by Ibn 'Abbaas and collected by al-Bukhaaree (Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, (Arabic-English), (Riyadh: Maktabah ar-Riyaad al-Hadeethah, 1981), vol.9, pp. 348-9, no.469) and Muslim (Abdul Hamid Siddiq, *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, 1987), vol.1, pp.14-5, no.27). In this *Hadeeth* the present tense of the verb from which the verbal noun *Tawheed* is derived was used by the Prophet (~).

3 Ibn Abil-'Ezz al-Hanafee, *Sharh al-'Aqeedah at-Tahaaweeyah*, p.78.

4 Ibn Hajar, *Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb*, (Hydrabad, 1325-7)vol. 10, p.225.

5 'Abdul-Qaahir ibn Taahir aI-Baghdaadee, *Al-Farq bain al-Firaq*, (Beirut: Daar al-Ma'rifah), pp.19-20.

6 Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Kareem ash-Shahrastaanee, *Al-Milal wan-Nihal*, (Beirut: Daar al-Ma'rifah, 2nd ed., 1975), vol.1, p.30.

7 Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Ar-Radd 'alaa al-Jahmeeyah*, (Riyadh: Daar al-Liwaa, 1st ed., 1977), pp.41-43.

8 Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Kareem ash-Sharastaanee, *Al-Milal wan-Nihal*, vol.1, p.46.

9 Soorah az-Zumar 39:62.

10 Soorah as-Saafaat 37:96.

11 Soorah al-Anfaal 8:17. This was in reference to a miraculous incident which took place when the Prophet (~) gathered some dust in his hand and threw it at the enemy (at the beginning of the Battle of Badr). Allaah caused the dust to reach the faces of the enemy in spite of their great distance.

12 Soorah at-Taghaabun 64:11.

13 Reported by Ibn 'Abbaas and collected by at-Tirmidhee. See Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson - Davies, *An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith*, (English Trans.), (Damascus, Syria: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1976), p.68, no.19.

14 Soorah at-Taghanbun 64:14.

15 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:155.

16 Soorah al-Baqarah, 2:216.

17 A charm worn to bring good fortune or avert evil.

18 Collected by Ahmad.

19 Reported by 'Aaeshah and collected by al-Bukhaaree (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*, (Arabic - English) vol.3, p.535, no.861), Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.) vol.3, i,. 931, no.4266 and no.4267) and Abu Daawood (Ahmad Hasan, *Sunan Abu Dawud* (English Trans.), (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, 1st. ed., 1984), vol.3, p. 1294).

20 Reported by 'Aa'eshah and collected by al-Bukhaaree (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*, (Arabic-English), vol.6, p.495, no.535) and Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.), vol.3, p.1195, no.5439 and 5440).

21 Soorah al-Fat-h 48:6.

22 Soorah ash-Shooraa 42:11.

23 Genesis 2:2, "And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done." (*Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version (Nelson, 1951), p.2).

24 In contrast Allaah says explicitly in the Qur'aan, **"No tiredness overcomes Him nor sleep..."** (Soorah al-Baqarah 2:255).

25 Exodus 32:14, "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people." (*Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version),

26 Allaah clearly states that in the following verse: **"They ask you (Muhammad) about the spirit. Tell (them) that the spirit (exists) by my Lord's command"** (Soorah al-Israa 17:85).

27 Soorah ash-Shooraa 42-11.

28 Hebrews 7:1-3, (*Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version).

29 Hebrews, 5:5-6, (*Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version).

30 Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar states in his book *Faith of Shi'a Islam*, (U.S.A.: Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 2nd ed. 1983): "We believe that, like the prophet, an **Imam must be Infallible, that is to say incapable of making errors or doing wrong, either Inwardly or outwardly, from his birth to his death, either intentionally or unintentionally**, because the Imams are the preservers of Islam and it is under their protection." (p.32). See also *Islam*, (Teheran: A Group of Muslim Brothers, 1973), p.35, by Sayed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

31 AI-Muzaffar further states: "We maintain that the powers of the Imams to receive inspiration has reached the highest degree of excellence, and we say that it is a Divinely - given power. By this means **the Imam is able to understand information about anything, anywhere, and at any time**, and he understands by means of this Divinely - given power at once, without recourse to methodological reasoning or guidance from a teacher.

32 Al-Khomeini states: "Certainly the Imam has a dignified station, a lofty rank, a creational caliphate, and sovereignty and mastery over all atoms of creation." (Aayatullah Musavi al-Khomeini, *al-Hukoomah al-Islaameeyah*, (Beirut: at-Talee'ah Press; Arabic ed., 1979), p.52).

33 Soorah at-Tawbah 9:128.

34 (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, (English Trans.), vol.3, pp. 1385-86, no.4957).

35 Soorah Yoonus 10:31.

36 Soorah az-Zukhruf, 43:87.

37 Soorah al-'Ankaboot, 29:63.

38 Soorah Yoosuf, 12:106.

39 Mujaahid ibn Jubayr al-Makkee (642-722) was Ibn 'Abbaas' most outstanding student. The narrations of his *Tafseer* (commentary) of the Qur'aan has been compiled by 'Abdur-Rahmaan at-Taahir and published in two volumes under the title, *Tafseer Mujaahid*, (Islamabad: Majma' al-Buhooth).

40 Collected by Ibn Jareer at-Tabaree.

41 Soorah Aal'Imraan, 3:67.

42 Quoted in Sulaymaan ibn 'Abdul-Wahhaab's *Tayseer al-'Azeez al-Hameed*, (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaamee, 2nd., 1970), p.34.

43 Soorah adh-Dhaariyiat, 51:56.

44 Soorah an-Nahl, 16:36.

45 Reported by Ibn 'Abbaas and collected by at-Tirmidhee. See *An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith*, (English Trans.), p.68.

46 Soorah al-Baqarah, 2:186.

47 Soorah Qaaf, 50:16.

48 *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol.1, p.387, no.1474.

49 Soorah al-Anbiyaa, 21:66.

50 Soorah al-A'raaf, 7:194.

51 Abdul-Qaadir (1077-1166) was a principal of a school of Hanbalite Law and a Ribaat (monastery) in Baghdad. His Sermons (collected in *al-Fat-h ar-Rabbaane*, Cairo 1302) were strictly orthodox with some, mystic interpretations of the Qur'aan. Ibn 'Arabee (born 1165) declared him the *Qutb* of his time and stated that he had a rank which placed him above all beings except God. 'Alee ibn Yousuf ash-Shattanawfee (d. 1314 CE) wrote a book called *Bahjat al-Asraar* (Cairo, 1304) in which he attributed many miracles to 'Abdul-Qaadir. The Qaadireeyah Sufi order is named after him and its spiritual exercises and regulations traced back to him. (*Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp.5-7 and 202-205).

52 Soorah al-An'aam, 6:17.

53 Soorah az-Zumar, 39:3.

54 Faatimah was the Prophet Muhammad's youngest daughter who married the Prophet's cousin 'Alee ibn Abee Taalib, and Hasan and Husayn were their sons.

55 Soorah al-Baqarah, 2:165.

56 Soorah at-Tawbah 9:13.

57 Soorah al-Maa'idah, 5:23.

58 Soorah al-Maa'idah, 5:44.

59 Soorah at-Tawbah, 9:31.

60 Christian clergy made *Haraam* the marrying of more than one wife and the marrying of first cousins. Roman Catholicism forbade priests from marrying and forbade divorce in general.

61 The Christian Church made *Halaal* the consumption of pork, blood and alcohol. Some of them also made allowable painting and statues depicting God as a man.

62 Collected by at-Tirmidhee.

63 Soorah an-Nisaa, 4:48.

64 *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p.468.

65 W.L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980), pp.66-67 and 586-7. See also John Hinnells, *Dictionary of Religions* (England: Penguin Books, 1984) pp.67-8.

66 *Dictionary of Religions*, p.337.

67 *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, p.231.

68 *Dictionary of Religions*, pp.361-2.

69 *Dictionary of Religions*, p.358.

70 Ibid., p. 363.

71 Literally, "men of the unseen world". The world is supposed to endure due to the intercessions of a hierarchy of "averting" Saints whose number are fixed, the place of one who dies being immediately filled. (*Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, p.582).

72 *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp.55.

73 *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, p.72.

74 *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 262-3.

75 Soorah ash-Shooraa, 26:29.

76 Soorah an-Naazi'aat, 79:24.

77 *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, p.327.

78 Ibid., p.391.

79 *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, pp.508-9.

80 Soorah az-Zumar, 39:62.

81 Soorah ar-Rahmaan, 55:26.

82 Quoted in Francis Hitching's, *The Neck of the Giraffe*, (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1982), p.254 from Tax and Callender, 1960, vol.111, p.45.

83 Soorah an-Nahl, 16:36.

84 Soorah Aal'Imraan, 3:31.

85 Reported by Anas and collected by al-Bukhaaree (*Sahih Bukhari* (English- Arabic), vol.1, p.20, no.13) and Muslim (*Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.1, p.31, no.71).

86 Soorah an-Nisaa, 4:80.

87 Soorah Aal'Imraan, 3:32.

88 Reported by al-Bukhaaree (*Sahih Bukhari*, (English-Arabic), vol.8, p.296, no.443).

89 Soorah al-Furqaan, 25:43.

90 Soorah adh-Dhaariyaat, 51:56.

91 William Halsey (ed.), *Colliers Encyclopedia*, (U.S.A: Crowell-Collier Educational Foundation; 1970, vol.16, p.110.

92 Soorah al-An'aam, 6:40.

93 Reported by Ahmad. at-Tabaraanee and al-Bayhaqee in *az-Zuhd*. See *Tayseer al-'Azeez al-Hameed*, p.118.

94 Collected by Ibn Khuzaymah.

95 Reported by Ibn Abee Haatim and quoted in *Tayseer al-'Azeez al-Hameed*, p. 587

96 Collected by Ahmad and at-Tabaraanee.

97 Soorah an-Nisaa 4:34.

98 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:228.

99 Soorah an-Nahl 16:81.

100 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:47.

101 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:253.

102 Soorah an-Nisaa 4:32.

103 Collected by both al-Bukhaaree and Muslim. See *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic - English). vol. 8, p.328. no.497. and *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.). vol.4. p. 1530. no.7070.

104 Collected by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim. See *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic - English) vol. 3, p.438. no.730 and *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.) vol.3, p. 1017. no. 4496.

105 Soorah Aal'Imraan 3:110.

106 Soorah al-Hujuraat 49:13.

107 Reported by Abu Hurayrah and collected by al-Bukhaaree (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*; (Arabic-English), vol.7, pp.18-9, no.27) and Muslim (*Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.), vol.2, p.749, no.3457).

108 Reported by Abu Hurayrah and collected by at-Tirmidhee.

109 Reported by 'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr and collected by Ahmed.

110 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:204.

111 Among them are ten well known, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmaan, 'Alee, Talhah, az-Zubayr, Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas, Sa'eed ibn Zayd, 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn 'Awf, Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jaarraah (see al-'Aqeedah at-Tahaaweeyah, pp.485-7).

112 Reported by Jaabir and collected by Muslim (*Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.3, p.1034, no.4576).

113 Soorah al-Fat-h 48:18.

114 Collected by Muslim. See *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.) vol.1, p.65, no.209.

115 Reported by 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab and collected by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim (See *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, (Arabic-English), vol.4, p.435, no.654).

116 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:257, 3:68, 42:9 and 45:19.

117 Soorah an-Nisaa 4:119, 7:27, 30, and 4:75.

118 Soorah al-Israa 17:33.

119 Soorah Aal'Imraan 3:28, 4:139, 144 and 5:51.

120 Soorah al-Anfaal 8:34.

121 Soorah Younus 10:62-63.

122 *Al-'Aqeedah at-Tahaaweeyah*, p.358.

123 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:257.

124 *Encyclopedia of Islaam*, p.629. See also 'Alee ibn 'Uthmaan al-Hujweeree, *Kashf al-Mahjoob*, trans. by Nicholson (London: Luzac, rep. 1976), p.214.

125 Soorah al-Hajj 22:6 and 62, 24:25 and 31:30.

126 Sanskrit term meaning "blown out" referring to the extinction of all worldly desires, or salvation. Though the term originated in Vedantic (*Bhagavad-Gita* and the Vedas) it is most often associated with Buddhism. In *Hinayana* Buddhism the term is equated with extinction while in *Mahayana* Buddhism it is a state of bliss (W. L. Resse, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980), p.393).

127 Ibid, p.72.

128 From the Greek *"Mystes"* meaning "one initiated into the mysteries." The term is derived from the Greek mystery religions whose initiates bore the name *"mystes"* (*Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, p.374).

129 *Colliers Encyclopedia*, vol.17, p.114.

130 *Dictionary of Religions*, p.68.

131 *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, pp.365-6 and 374.

132 "The authors of treatises on Muslim mysticism have often compared the "annihilation" of *Sufism* with Buddhist *Nirvana*; but according to others this comparison is entirely inadequate as the Buddhist idea of annihilation is independent of the idea of God and includes the idea of transmigration of souls, to which *Nirvana* puts an end. In Muslim mysticism on the other hand,

there is no question of the passing of soul upon death into another body and the notion of a personal and all-present God is throughout predominant. The origin of the Muslim conception of *Fanaa* has rather to be sought in Christianity from which it seems to be borrowed. This conception simply means the annihilation of the individual human will before the will of God, an idea which forms the center of all Christian mysticism." (*Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, p.98).

133 *Dhikr*, which normally means the remembrance of God, in mystic circles, is used to refer to the continuous repetition of God's names and attributes.

134 Collected by Muslim (*Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.1, pp.111-112 - nos. 337,339 and p.113, no.341.

135 Soorah al-'A'raaf 7:143.

136 Walking around an object of religious devotion.

137 Reported by Abu Hurayrah and collected by al-Bukhaaree (*Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic - English). vol.8, pp.336-7. no. 509.

138 Soorah Aal'Imraan 3:31.

139 Collected by Abu Daawood (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, (English Trans.) vol.3, p. 1294, no.4590 and at-Tirmidhee.

140 Soorah al-Furqaan 25:63.

141 Soorah an-Nisaa 4:140.

142 Soorah as-Sajdah 32:9, and 38:72.

143 Soorah al-Hijr 15:29 and Soorah Saad 38:72.

144 Soorah al-Anbiyaa 21:91 and Soorah at-Tahreem 66:12.

145 Soorah Taahaa 20:22.

146 *Tayseer al-'Azeez al-Hameed*, pp.84-5.

147 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:105.

148 Soorah al-A'raaf 7:73.

149 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:125.

150 Soorah al-Fajr 89:30.

151 Soorah al-Israa 17:85.

152 Soorah Aal'Imraan 3:47.

153 Soorah Aal'Imraan 3:59.

154 See the Chapter on Seeing Allaah, p.136 of this work for further detail on this point.

155 Collected by al-Bukhaaree (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*, (Arabic - English), vol.4, pp. 290-1 no.430) and Muslim. (*Sahih Muslim*, (English Trans.) vol.4, p.1391, no.6390).

156 Soorah as-Saaffaat 37:96.

157 Soorah al-Anfaal 8:17.

158 Soorah Maryam 19:17.

159 Soorah Taahaa 20:14.

160 Soorah al-Maa'oon 107: 5-7.

161 *al-'Aqeedah at-Tahaaweeyah* p. 394.

162 Soorah az-Zumar 39:42.

163 Collected by Muslim (*Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.2, p. 437 no.2005).

164 Soorah al-Fajr 89:27-30.